DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 240 016 SO 015 362

AUTHOR Dilsaver, Lary M.
TITLE Tourism, Field Trips and Geographic Education.
PUB DATE Oct 83
NOTE 11p.; Paper presented at the National Council for Geographic Education Conference (Ocho Rios, Jamaica, October 23-28, 1983).
PUB TYPE Guides - Classroom Use - Guides (For Teachers) (052) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Field Trips; *Geography Instruction; Higher Education; *Program Implementation; Tourism; Travel

ABSTRACT

In university level geography education, both a market and a need exist for "learning trips" combining the elements of a field trip with those of a commercial tour. Planning such trips involves four steps. The first of these is to establish the conditions of the tour, including identification of the topical focus, specific destinations and sites to be visited (museums, geological sites, etc.), time available, costs, and participants' characteristics. The second step, planning the itinerary, requires day-to-day scheduling of sites and accommodations. Step three involves double checking and reworking this itinerary to account for unforeseen delays, travel times, and travel conditions. The final step, marketing the tour, lends itself to several options, from contracting with a tour company to enlisting the aid of the university continuing education department. An outline of a geographical learning tour conducted in Ireland provides a daily list that includes lodging, place, scenic features, and study topics of general geography and Ireland's geography. (LP)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED240016

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

✓ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Lary M. Dilsaver

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

TOURISM, FIELD TRIPS AND GEOGRAPHIC EDUCATION

by
Lary M. Dilsaver

SO 015 363

Paper presented at the National Council for Geographic Education Conference (Ocho Rios, Jamaica, October 23-28, 1983).

TOURISM, FIELD TRIPS AND GEOGRAPHIC EDUCATION

Geography as a discipline has always concerned itself with places. As such it has traditionally emphasized travel to various places by its practitioners. Indeed, in the nineteenth century German geographers were required to spend a year abroad travelling and studying different environments prior to receiving a doctoral degree. The exact location of an individual's "wanderjahr" varied widely and in the last analysis was not important. What was important was that a good geographer saw for himself places in all their human and physical complexity and diversity.

In the twentieth century the tradition continued, although required sojourns of a year or more disappeared with democratization of universities in both Europe and North America. William Morris Davis, Robert Platt, Carl Sauer and many others eloquently supported field experience as a fundamental building block in a geographer's education. At that time, geography, the study of places, still occupied a niche in the school curriculum. How better to teach geography to grade schoolers than to take them to a place where they could view man-land relationships for themselves?

In the last few decades, however, emphasis on field work and on educational field trips has all but disappeared at all levels, including graduate school. A part of this can be attributed to new tools that lessen the need for field research in many topical areas. More important, however, has been the catastrophic rise in all costs associated with travel. Universities today have insufficient funds for local student field trips, much less international ones.

Despite these cost increases, international tourism continues to grow. After a couple of difficult, inflation-racked years, the 1983 summer saw a 50 percent rise in passport applications. Most European and Asian countries reported sharp increases in visits by both Americans and others. Many tourists were young, college-age people engaging in what one anthropologist has likened to a "rite of passage" - a summer bumming through Europe. Money is being spent on travel, but not the type of travel that teaches about the places being visited - that is, that teaches geography.

The solution from the professional geographer's point of view is to operate some combination of a geographical field trip and a commercial tour. There are two very basic and important reasons for this - (1) it will provide geography students with vehicles for experiencing alternate human and physical environments, and (2) it will aid in dissemination of geographic teaching to non-majors or non-students who sign up for no-credit participation in this "learning tour." A further benefit may be provided by formation of scholarships for qualified geography students made available by the fees charged to non-student participants. In the remainder of this paper I wish to discuss the process of planning such a tour and to use Ireland as an example-site for an international tour that can illustrate both the elements of geography that combine to make that place unique and a number of fundamental geographical principles.

The tour planning process is a complicated one. It requires the planner to evaluate a set of conditions for the tour and then to coordinate a number of logistical and pedogogical elements into a workable learning experience. There are four discrete steps in the planning process, each of which will allow for no error.

The first step in the process of planning a "learning tour" is to identify conditions under which the tour must operate, based on the prospective partitipants and the characteristics of the destination area. The conditions of the tour generally include:

(1) The topical focus of the tour, which would be a simple regional overview or a specific aspect of geography. The example tour is a general one aimed at presenting a broad overview not only of Ireland's geography, but of the discipline itself.

(2) Any specific destination foci to be included, such as a particular museum, popular recreation area, urban development, or a noteworthy geologic site. The Ireland tour includes notable tourist areas, like the Lakes of Killarney, but also non-tourist areas of geographic significance like Bantry Bay.

(3) Any events to be attended, around which must fit all the rest of the tour schedule. This usually refers to fairs, ceremonies and other cultural events.

(4) The amount of time available. The Ireland tour is aimed at attracting approximately half non-students, presumably working people, with limited vacations. Hence a standard Irish tour duration of 14 days was chosen.

(5) The amount of free time for independent work or for recreation to be included. Because the Ireland tour is aimed at introductory level participants, only free time for recreation and shopping is provided at nights and on days nine and thirteen.

(6) The cost limits. This influences the choice of lodgings and the necessity for meal stops in locations with wide choices of restaurants.

(7) The number and characteristics of participants including age, health, and level of previous geographic training. The Ireland tour, as mentioned, is aimed at students with no background in geography, approximately 30 in number. There will be no significant hikes but occasional short walks will be required. Any adult in moderately good health should be able to participate.

Having established the conditions of the tour and its participants, the second step is the development of a basic itinerary. Two lists must be developed to accomplish this. One is a list of tourist sites, the "musts" that all prospective travelers hear about from travel agents and destination veterans. To ignore these is to court dissatisfaction and long-term marketing failure. The second and more important list consists of sites of geographic significance appropriate to the tour's focus. In Ireland this task is simplified by short distances and the fortuitous spatial coincidence of the commonest tour route, counterclockwise from Shannon Airport around the country, and the finest sites of historic, geomorphic, and modern economic geography. From these two lists a simple daily itinerary is developed with proposed overnight stops identified. Attention here to competitive tours is worthwhile, because occasionally large savings can be made by following a particular sequence, in this case a counterclockwise route, rather than some other sequence.

After the itinerary is established, the third step is an integrative one working, double-checking, and reworking the daily schedule to establish the full detailed itinerary and clear it with transport schedules, lodging and meal availability, budget limits, and the availability of outside lecturers should they be required. It is important to take into account here the certainty of unforeseen delays, the probable speed of land transport, and the inevitable emergencies that will occur. In the Ireland tour the greatest distance to be travelled by road in a day is less than 120 miles. Each day would take a small group or individual five to six hours. Hence, it will take a group of thirty a full eight hours at least. The last check to be undertaken in this step is establishing the availability of lodging and transport facilities for the proposed time. Should any fail to be available, it may necessitate a complete reworking of the tour to accomodate necessary changes.

The last step in organizing and conducting a geography field tour is in many ways the most difficult. Marketing the tour is tedious and often frustrating, but there are several promising avenues. First, many universities operate departments of continuing education and some sanction or even promote field courses. Occasionally a travel agency will promote a tour by a local expert if they are allowed to make the bookings and garner the commissions. Both of these avenues lead the prospective tour leader to established audiences for his product. A more difficult but potentially successful method is to convince a tour company to offer the tour as part of their portfolio. The Ireland tour is being marketed through Heritage Tours, Ltd. of Oakland, California, a company founded and owned by a geographer. This is valuable but difficult to accomplish since many tour companies disregard such tours as

amateur and not marketable. Finally, an enterprising individual can market his own field tour though this is the least successful and most difficult means of all.

Nevertheless, the geographer's learning tour has enormous potential. Dismay has turned to disgust among many veteran tour participants as the shoddy, juvenile approach to the quality of places visited insults their intelligence. Other experiments in "learning tours" including the whole segment of hiking/backcountry "adventure tours", the naturalist tours to the Galapagos Island or East Africa, and even a few experimental anthropological excursions have been among the most successful segments of the tour industry in the last decade. True, there are problems associated with a geography field tour as described in this paper. As a tourists' tour it may neglect some "must see sights" in lieu of sites of geographic importance. But this is more than offset by a depth of coverage, and the presentation of worthwhile place-information.

In the realm of geographic education, the leader must present topics when they are appropriate to places visited, which may not be in a logical sequence by comparison to lectures or textbooks. For example, in the Ireland tour, discussions of physical, historical and modern economic aspects are split into segments appropriate to sites throughout the itinerary. This puts a strain on the lecturer/leader to synthesize the information and establish links between topics that communicate a logical body of data to the students. While this may be considered a disadvantage, though, it is far outweighed by the value and potential student motivation generated by discussing various topics at appropriate field sites.

In conclusion, it is time that field geography returns to the education of geographers.

In this paper, I have deliberately spoken of international tourism and used an international tour as an example. Although data indicate that hundreds of thousands of Americans travel internationally every year, a large percentage of them on tours, many others may never be able to afford this luxury. Scholarships, at least for graduate students, to be funded by non-student tour fees is a partial answer. But another is to operate these tours domestically. Hundreds can be organized and sold in the United States. They are not pure field trips. They are not frivolous tours. They are a compromise to each what the tourism clientele has shown it wants, and what geography students must have. The jobs of synthesizing spatial information to prepare these tours and communicating the geography of places fall to those best qualified - the teachers of geography. There is a market. There is a need. Let us satisfy both.

A GEOGRAPHICAL TOUR OF IRELAND

Day	Lodging	Place	Scenic Features	Topics of General Geography	Topics of Ireland's Geography
2	Shannon	Shannon	Castle, Medeival Banquet	Spatial Development, Growth Poles, Geography as Planning	Western Ireland as a Development Region
3	Killarney	Killarney	Lakes, Scenic Views	Principles of Geomorphology	Landforms of Ireland
4	Killarney	Kerry Peninsula	Scenic Views	Culture and Environment in Agricultural Modernization	Climate and Agriculture Regions of Ireland
5	Killarney	Bantry	Scenic Drive	Energy and Development	Ireland's Energy Outlook and the Role of the EEC
6	Waterford	Cashel	Ecclesiastical Ruins	Site and Situation of Towns: Medieval and Modern	Celtic Heritage of Ireland
7	Waterford	Kennedy Park	Scenery, Arboretum	Climate and Vegetation, Reforestation	Impact of Man on Ireland's Natural Vegetation
8	Dublin	Dublin	Museums, Shopping, Cultural Attractions	Urban morphology, Role of Transport in Development, Primate Cities	Historical Geography of Dublin, Evolution of Ireland's Settlement Pattern, Dublin Architecture
9	Dublin	Dublin	Free Day		
10	Dublin	Dundalk, Boyne Valley	Scenery, Ecclesiastical Sites	Religion as a Spatial Factor, Borders as Spatial Phenomena	Religious Landscapes of Ireland, Geography of the Ulster Conflict
11	Galway	Galway	Scenery, Shopping, Ecclesiastical Site	Geography of Language, Ports as Multi-Cultural Foci	Roles of Catholocism and of Spain in Irish Culture
12	Galway	Connemara	Scenic Views	Geographic Principles of Cultural Survival	Past and Present Landscapes of Ireland
13	Shannon	Shannon	Afternoon Departure	Geography as a Synthesizing Discipline	Ireland-Land and People, Past and Future